

VZCZCXYZ0001
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHCV #0182 0412017
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 102017Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2576
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 7934
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY 0059
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 000182

SIPDIS

HQSOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
DEPARTMENT PASS TO AID/OTI (RPORTER)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/10/2029
TAGS: PREL PTER MCAP VE CO
SUBJECT: AUSTRIANS REQUEST INFORMATION ON VENEZUELA-FARC
TIES

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR FRANCISCO FERNANDEZ,
FOR REASON 1.4(D)

¶11. (U) This is an Action Request - See Para. 4.

¶12. (C) During a February 5 courtesy call on the Charge, Austrian Ambassador to Venezuela Thomas Schuller-Gotzburg said the Venezuelan National Guard is seeking to purchase weapons from Austria. Schuller-Gotzburg inquired whether we had information linking the Venezuelan military to left-wing terrorist groups in Colombia. The Charge sent a letter February 10 to Schuller-Gotsburg describing open-source reporting that links the Venezuelan military to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and pledged to continue looking for additional information to share.

¶13. (SBU) The letter to Schuller-Gotzburg described two press articles. The first, from The Economist's May 2008 online edition, detailed information gleaned from FARC leader Raul Reyes' recovered laptop which suggests Venezuelan army officers have helped the FARC to obtain small arms, rocket-propelled grenades, and to set up meetings with arms dealers. The second article, from the L.A. Times, covers the June 8, 2008, arrest of a Venezuelan National Guardsman along the Venezuela-Colombia border who was allegedly on his way to deliver 40,000 AK-47 rifle munitions to the FARC.

¶14. (SBU) Action Request: Post requests that Department provide any points or additional information we can pass to the Austrian Ambassador. Since it is unclear whether Schuller-Gotsburg was specifically asked by his government to consult with us, we recommend that Embassy Vienna not raise the issue directly at this time.

CAULFIELD